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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE
TO ELABORATE A CONVENTION TO COMBAT
DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA (INCD)
First Session
24 May-3 June 1993
Agenda item 5

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION

1. By its resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992, the General Assembly established a Special Voluntary Fund, administered by the head of the ad hoc secretariat under the authority of the Secretary General of the United Nations, to assist developing countries affected by desertification and drought, in particular the least developed countries, to participate fully and effectively in the negotiating process.

2. During the organizational session of the negotiating Committee some countries indicated their contributions to the Fund, others indicated their intention to do so as soon as their internal procedures would permit. The

Chairman of the Committee urged Governments in a position to do so but which have not yet done so to contribute to the Special Voluntary Fund according to their possibilities at an early date. He also urged the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to contribute generously to the Special Voluntary Fund.

3. Some new pledges and payments have been made since the Committee's organizational session, accompanied in some cases by conditions which are being clarified with the competent authorities. The state of pledges and receipts is shown in the following table:

Special Voluntary Fund for participation of developing countries
(General Assembly resolution 47/188, para. 15)

Status of contributions as of 23 April 1993

	Special Voluntary Fund	
	Pledges	Contributions
	(US dollars)	
Member States		
Canada	81 000*	-
Denmark	-	200 000
France	70 000*	-
Germany	180 000*	-
Japan	to be announced	-
Netherlands	300 000 to 500 000	for both funds
Norway	-	200 000
Spain	60 000*	-
Sweden	300 000	-
United Kingdom	71 000*	-
United States of America	-	50 000
Others		
UNEP	-	-
Total	762 000	450 000

* Approximate equivalent in United States dollars.

4. Most of these resources have been used in connection with the first substantive session of the Committee, after appropriate consultations with the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, particularly on the interpretation of paragraph 15 of the resolution on the determination of countries eligible for assistance. In extending assistance to the countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, due attention has been

paid to the particular situation of the countries concerned, as well as precedents established recently by other negotiating processes on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

5. In light of the above considerations the secretariat has issued travel authorizations to one delegate from about 70 countries including most LDCs and a significant number of developing countries affected by desertification and drought as specified in paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 47/188.

6. In addition, financial assistance has been extended to representatives of developing countries who are members of the Bureau of the Committee and its two Working Groups, in order to ensure that the delegates concerned have no difficulty in participating in the Committee's work.

7. It is estimated that the cost to the Fund of these arrangements for the second session will be in the order of $348,000.

8. Should similar arrangements be adopted for the second, third, fourth and fifth sessions (Geneva, New York, Geneva and Paris) the total amount required for this Fund would be approximately US$ 2,400,000. In the light of this situation, the Committee may wish to call upon potential donors to make the necessary contributions to the Special Voluntary Fund.

9. The Committee may also wish to give guidance to the Executive Secretary concerning the adequacy of the arrangements made in respect of the use of the Fund for participation in the first substantive session and concerning its future use.

II. TRUST FUND FOR THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS

10. The General Assembly, by its resolution 47/228, paragraph 13 decided that "the negotiating process shall be funded through existing United Nations budgetary resources, without negatively affecting its programmed activities, and through voluntary contributions to a Trust Fund established specifically for that purpose for the duration of the negotiations ...". It also urged "governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to contribute generously to the Trust Fund."

11. At the time of the Committee's organizational session, a pledge to this Fund had been recorded from the United States of America of US$ 200,000 and from France FF 600,000 (approximately $110,000). The Netherlands also pledged a contribution of an amount between US$ 300,000 and 500,000. Since the organizational session, the United Nations Environment Programme has agreed to make a contribution of US $250,000. A number of other countries made pledges but without giving specific figures regarding the envisaged contribution. The following countries made such pledges: Canada, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Spain and Sweden. The secretariat has established contacts with other countries as well as agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations to enlist their support. The state of pledges and receipts is shown in the following table:

Trust Fund for the Negotiating Process

Status of contributions as of 23 April 1993

	Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities	
	Pledges	Contributions
	(US dollars)	
Member States		
Canada	to be announced	-
Denmark	to be announced	-
France	110 000*	-
Germany	to be announced	-
Japan	to be announced	-
Netherlands	300 000 to 500 000	for both funds
Norway	to be announced	-
Spain	to be announced	-
Sweden	to be announced	-
United Kingdom	-	-
United States of America	-	200 000*
Others		
UNEP	250 000	-
Total	360 000	200 000

* Approximate equivalent in United States dollars.

12. At the time of the adoption of resolution 47/188, the General Assembly was informed that estimated costs in 1993 and 1994 for staff and conference servicing in connection with the work of the Committee would be absorbed in the United Nations Programme Budget for the biennium 1993-1994. These resources are being considered by the resumed forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, interim measures were taken for a period of three months from January to March 1993, for the establishment of the Ad Hoc secretariat and the initiation of the required action. In addition, the Secretary-General of the United Nations informed Member States of the establishment of the Voluntary Fund for the purpose of supplementing the resources to be provided by the regular budget. It was pointed out that these additional resources are required to enable the secretariat to undertake activities designed to provide the necessary support to the negotiating process including preparatory substantive work at the national, regional and global levels. As summarized in the Aide Memoire attached to the Secretary-General's note verbale, the secretariat has estimated US$ 3.2 million for the extrabudgetary resources needed to enable the secretariat to carry out the activities identified.

13. As far as the staffing of the secretariat of the Committee is concerned, a senior official has already been recruited for one year on the basis of the resources available in the Fund. Further, the Executive Secretary is discussing with some United Nations organizations (UNDP, UNEP, WMO and FAO) on the possibility of obtaining the secondment of their staff to the secretariat on a full or part-time basis. As far as governments are concerned, the secretariat is in contact with France, Canada, Germany, Switzerland and Spain to obtain the secondment of a civil servant or the financing of Associate Experts from developing countries. Other staff members, both professional and general service, are being made available from the United Nations secretariat, other institutions or temporarily recruited.

14. The Committee may wish to call upon potential donors to respond to the need for contributions of the Trust Fund so as to enable the secretariat to launch the activities designed to support the negotiating process.